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Spotlight

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FOCUS on FEORP

IPC Clearinghouse

The Interdepartmental Placement Committee (IPC) Subcommittee on Recruitment and Placement has established a Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program Clearinghouse as outlined in FPM Letter 720-2. The IPC is an organization which facilitates communication between OPM's Washington, D.C., Area Office and the Federal appointing authorities that it serves.

A steering committee comprised of representatives from about ten Federal agencies advises and directs the clearinghouse, and based on available resources, they decide on projects for the clearinghouse. So far, four project committees have been formed:

1. The Mailing List Committee is building onto a computerized recruitment mailing system already in place at the Comptroller of the Currency. It will work to assist in the maintenance and expansion of this system in exchange for use of the system by FEORP Clearinghouse members.

2. Monthly Recruitment Calendar Committee is responsible for coordinating and collecting in a central place agencies recruitment and outreach activity for the month. In its effort to assist the agencies in coordinated recruitment efforts, the committee plans to issue a publication to disseminate this information.

3. The Recruitment Materials Library Committee is establishing a central library of a wide variety of books and materials which support recruitment efforts. Using FEORP resources, this central library alleviates the need for separate FEORP libraries in each agency.

4. The Community Relations/Outreach Committee focuses on the D.C. metropolitan area where many special interest groups and minority organizations are headquartered, and is a key committee in keeping those groups informed of scheduled recruitment and outreach activities.

As these working committees progress in their designated tasks and the benefits of these committees are seen in individual agency FEORP programs, it is hoped that agencies will become more interested in contributing resources for expansion of the clearinghouse which would allow more projects to be undertaken.

The Chairperson of the FEORP Clearinghouse is from the Smithsonian Institution with another officer being from the Fish and Wildlife Service. OPM participates to a large extent and assists in facilitating projects.

For more information about the Washington, D.C. Area FEORP Clearinghouse, inquiries and responses may be directed to Joanne Martin, U.S. Department of the Interior, telephone 202-343-3104.

22 Percent Increase in VRA

Federal agencies have reported a 22 percent increase in veterans readjustment appointments made in fiscal year 1979 over the previous year. A total of 15,785 Vietnam era veterans were hired under the VRA authority, the highest number since 1975 when 18,219 appointments were made. In 1978, 12,989 were hired.

The VRA authority provides improved employment opportunities for disadvantaged Vietnam era veterans. It allows agencies to hire these veterans without competition or civil service examinations and subsequently to convert them to career appointments after two years of satisfactory employment and training.

Office of Personnel Management Director Alan K. Campbell called the increase a "gratifying response to President Carter's concern, expressed in a memorandum to the heads of departments and agencies in October 1978."

In his memorandum, the President indicated he had directed Campbell to contact each agency to work out specific plans to include goals and timetables for the implementation of the Veterans readjustment program.

"This effort," Campbell said, "brought a 111 percent increase in VRA hires during the second half of the year, 10,709 versus 5,076."

The VRA program was established by Executive Order in 1970. President Carter signed Public Law 95-520 in October 1978 which extended and liberalized the eligibility requirements for the program.

Of the total VRA hires in 1979, 1,551 or 10 percent were women, and 6,080 or 41 percent were minorities. A total of 136,000 veterans have been hired under the program since its inception. Altogether, veterans comprise 45 percent of the Federal work force.

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Training Law Exemptions

A recent article in the FEDERAL TRAINER addressed OPM delegation agreements with the agencies concerning exemptions from the training law. The Civil Service Reform Act authorizes OPM to delegate to the heads of agencies any function vested in or delegated to OPM.

The training law authorizes the President to exempt an employee or a class of employees from one or more constraints in the law when that would be in the public interest. That authority was delegated to OPM by Executive order. In implementation of the CSRA, OPM has identified its authority to grant exemptions from constraints in the training law as something it can delegate to agencies.

Through a blanket delegation, OPM has already granted the heads of agencies the authority to exempt employees from one constraint: the prohibition against an employee receiving more than one year of training through non-government facilities during each decade that he/she works for the government. An agency may now waive this constraint in individual cases provided that the employee's time in training does not exceed two years for a decade of service. A waiver for a group of employees still must be requested from OPM.

Agencies wishing to have the authority to grant exemptions from other constraints in the training law must develop a delegation agreement with OPM.

A delegation agreement describes the conditions under which a particular authority can be exercised, and it explains the performance standards and the system of oversight that the agency and OPM will use in monitoring the use of the authority.

For more information contact OPM, WED, Office of Training, P.O. Box 7230, Washington, D.C. 20044.

FPM on Microfiche

An information services company, Showcase Corporation, now offers an updated information system for Federal personnel offices.

The service contains complete information on:

1. The Basic Federal Personnel Manual (FPM) with all its supplements, bulletins and letters indexed and filmed behind the applicable chapter or subchapter.
2. The White Collar X-118 Qualification Standards along with all the additional handbooks and classifications organized and cross-indexed by the job series title and number.
3. The Blue Collar Handbook, the X-118C and all related information organized by job series.

As of January 15, 1980, Showcase incorporated all changes to the Blue Collar created by Part III of the Job Grading Standards for Trade and Labor Occupations. The Showcase Revised Blue Collar is a more efficient way to handle the increased workload due to this major transition in the classification of wage grade employees.

Showcase also has extracted the regulatory material from Chapter 711 concerning the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) and the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA). Chapter 1200 has been assigned for MSPB materials and Chapter 2400 has been assigned for FLRA material.

The complete service is $990 per year and is on GSA Schedule (FSS 67 IV B). For more information contact Showcase, 1730 North Lynn Street, Suite 400, Arlington, VA 22209, telephone 703-524-8555.

OPM Services for the Handicapped

FPM Letter 306-17, dated April 4, 1980, explains a new regulation which permits Schedule B appointments, for up to two years, of people certified as being capable of functioning in a specific position by a State or Veterans Administration vocational rehabilitation counselor. After the two years are up, the individual must go through competitive procedures if he or she wishes to continue Federal employment.

The purpose of the new authority, originally proposed by the Interagency Committee on Handicapped Employees, is to allow mentally restored individuals to demonstrate over a sustained period of time that they are fully restored and capable of functioning in the work environment. Once this is accomplished, it is hoped that their history of mental illness will no longer be a factor in their ability to compete successfully for employment.

Persons hired under this authority must meet the minimum qualifications described in OPM Handbooks X-118 and X-118C for the position and grade level to be filled.

Appointments under this authority are subject to prior approval by OPM. However, it is expected that once experience is gained with the use of the appointing authority, delegation to the agencies will be made.

For more information contact OPM, Office of Affirmative Employment Programs, Selective Placement Programs Office, 1900 E St., NW, Room 6514, Washington, D.C. 20415.

Spotlight

Editor: Ed Shell
The Director of the United States of America Office of Personnel Management has determined that the publication of this periodical is necessary in the transaction of public business required by law of this agency. Use of funds for printing this periodical has been approved by the Director, Office of Management and Budget through May 30, 1982.

"Take Charge of Your Own Career"

For anyone who presently works for the Federal Government or would like to, there is now available a step-by-step guidebook called "Take Charge of Your Own Career," by Donna J. Moore.

The book is structured and disciplined and is chockful of self-assessment assignments. It includes sections on how to complete a 171 (Personal Qualifications Statement), arranging, negotiating and designing an individual development plan, and how to deal with interviews and interviewers.

Some of the chapter titles in the book include: "Why looking backward can help you move forward," "Matching your skills and talents to the job market," and "Marketing the product," among others.

Moore has matched the self-assessment assignments to specific Federal occupations and X118 qualifications standards, which is one step further than many other guides now available.

Moore is a former Upward Mobility Coordinator for the Federal Government's equal employment opportunity efforts at the former U.S. Civil Service Commission. Currently, she is an Employee Development Specialist with OPM at the Regional Training Center in Seattle, Washington.

The book can be ordered directly from the author, prepaid. Cost is $10.00 plus .95 cents per copy postage and handling. Address requests to Donna J. Moore, P.O. Box 723, Bainbridge, WA 98110.

Donna J. Moore

On-Call Employment

On occasion Federal agencies must quickly respond to unpredictable fluctuations in workload. A new hiring option is now available to help the agencies when faced with this situation.

Under the new on-call employment program, a limited portion of an agency's work force can be hired on a work-as-needed basis for heavy workload periods. The employees receive career civil service appointments and are initially guaranteed at least six months work each year. As an inducement to participate in the program, employees are eligible for fringe benefits and eventual conversion to full-time positions as vacancies occur in the agency's regular work force.

The on-call program provides management with a trained cadre of permanent employees, available on short notice to supplement the full-time work force during above average workload periods. It reduces excessive use of overtime, and protects the full-time work force from reductions in force when workloads temporarily fall off.

OPM's approval of the on-call employment program followed an extensive two-year test at Naval Shipyards, Naval Air Rework Facilities, Air Force Repair Facilities and Censes Bureau Computer Centers.

The on-call plan was designed by a team of OPM, Defense Department, and Commerce Department specialists. Over 2,000 blue and white collar employees, many in skilled occupations, were hired during the test program.

Federal agencies wishing more information or guidance on the on-call program should check with their personnel office to see a copy of FPM Bulletin 340-4 dated April 18, 1980.

New Regulation for Mentally Restored

The Office of Personnel Management is making extra efforts to provide required accommodations for handicapped Federal, State, and local employees who need special assistance to attend OPM interagency training. The effort focuses on mainstreaming those persons needing special assistance where possible.

Special assistance may include interpreters for deaf and hearing-impaired employees, in-class recorders, and precourse material furnished well in advance so blind nominees needing readers can obtain assistance in their agencies or from family or friends. Agencies should notify OPM training staff well before the course session concerning the need for these special services.

For more information contact OPM, WED, Office of Training, P.O. Box 7230, Washington, D.C. 20044 or call 202-653-6132.

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Key Issues Identified in OPM Policy Agenda

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has published a list of key issues likely to confront the Federal civil service system and OPM over the next several years.

The agenda identifies seven major areas of concern: Employee benefits, personnel system simplification, workforce competence, management improvement, labor-management relations, equal employment opportunity, and long-range policy issues.

The proposed policy agenda was published in the June 3 *Federal Register,* inviting comments from Federal agencies and other interested parties.

OPM Director Alan K. Campbell said: "Identifying major problem areas is the logical first step toward improving the system which governs the management of Federal personnel. The ultimate aim is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Government while insuring fair and equitable treatment of employees." Campbell is the President's chief advisor on personnel matters.

An early draft of the agenda was circulated to a number of Federal agencies last October for comments and suggestions. OPM intends to update periodically the documents to reflect current issues.

Comments and suggestions on the proposed agenda should be sent within 90 days of publication to: Director, Office of Planning and Evaluation, Room 3305, Office of Personnel Management, 1900 E Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20415.

A group of counselors from throughout Japan work on an exercise to test their knowledge on the subject of sexual harrassment during a workshop at the Camp Zama Community Center. Both men and women attended the pilot training class which was coordinated by Ms. Pat Thomson, United States Army Japan, Assistant Equal Employment Officer.

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